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the transition zone comprising fibers from the first stratum and the second stratum commingled substantially uniformly across the composite's width and along the composite's length;

- (c) a storage stratum comprising an absorbent fibrous material; and
- (d) a liquid impervious backsheet.

924. (Twice Amended) The absorbent article of Claim 23, wherein at least one of the second stratum or the distribution stratum comprises crosslinked cellulosic fibers.

B2
1025. (Twice Amended) The absorbent article of Claim 23, wherein at least one of the second stratum or the distribution stratum comprises crosslinked eucalyptus fibers.

B3
36. (Twice Amended) An absorbent article, comprising:

- (a) a liquid pervious topsheet;
- (b) an absorbent composite, comprising a first stratum, a second stratum, and a transition zone intermediate and coextensive with the first stratum and the second stratum; the first stratum comprising first fibers and a binder; the second stratum comprising second fibers and a binder; and the transition zone comprising fibers from the first stratum and the second stratum commingled substantially uniformly across the composite's width and along the composite's length;

- (c) a storage stratum comprising an absorbent fibrous material; and
- (d) a liquid impervious backsheet.

B4
57. (Twice Amended) An absorbent article, comprising:

- (a) a liquid pervious topsheet;
- (b) an absorbent composite, comprising a first stratum, a second stratum, and a transition zone intermediate and coextensive with the first stratum and the second stratum;

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the first stratum comprising synthetic fibers and a binder;

the second stratum comprising crosslinked cellulosic fibers and a binder; and

the transition zone comprising fibers from the first stratum and the second stratum commingled substantially uniformly across the composite's width and along the composite's length;

(c) a storage stratum comprising an absorbent fibrous material; and

(d) a liquid impervious backsheet.